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A JAPANESE PRIEST IN TIBET.

Three Years in Tibet. By The Shramana Ekai Kawaguchi. Pp. xv+719. (Adyar [Madras], Benares and London: Theosophical Publishing Society, 1909.) Price 16s. net.

A NEW book on Tibet, offered to "the English-knowing public" by a Japanese priest who acted for a time as physician to the Grand Lama, raises our expectations of finding therein some fresh and interesting views of Tibetan life as seen from the inside. For the author enjoyed the advantage of moving freely behind the scenes, in the palace and in the monastic temples, in intimate relations with the "Living Buddha," and with many of the notabilities of this Old-World State, at a time when it was pursuing the even tenour of its existence, undisturbed by war's alarms.

A perusal of the volume, however, even in this respect, is somewhat disappointing to a European reader. It is a shallow, rambling, and whimsical narrative, from the standpoint of an emotional oriental monk, upon his wanderings on a pilgrimage from shrine to shrine in a land which he knew little about, and over ground mostly described in detail by European writers. Of geographical or scientific data there is positively nothing of any value, and little that is new even in regard to the religion of the country. Nevertheless, the reader who patiently perseveres through much that is trivial and tiresome may pick up some grains of information respecting the life in the great lamaseries.

The personality of the writer himself is quaintly romantic at times. On starting from Japan for Tibet in 1897, on what he tells us was a search for Sanskrit Buddhist books—a search in which he proved wholly unsuccessful—Mr. Kawaguchi, in his Buddhistic zeal, extracted from his friends, as farewell presents, their pledges to abstain from stimulants or tobacco-smoking and from "the brutal business" of catching fish. "About forty persons willingly granted (this) my appeal."

His æsthetic Japanese instinct leads him to break out frequently into a rhapsody or "*uta*" at the sight of some picturesque scene or aspect of nature; though at times he regretfully tells us that "I wished to embody my sentiments in a few verses, but the inspiration would not come." In "the *Dalai* jungle," which is the nearest he can get to the Himalayan "Tarai," where he halted on the way through Nepal to the Tibetan frontier, he heard a tiger roar, on which "an *uta* came to me:—

"The night sleeps still and calm, the moon shines bright,
What ho!—so loud a roar the stillness breaks,
Vibrating—ah! it is a tiger fierce! In ripples rough
his roar terrific throws
The surface even of the mountain stream."

The cuckoo's cry for him, instead of being a pleasure, was "awful."

NO. 2098, VOL. 82]

"My sense of loneliness was heightened by the note of the cuckoo, who now and then broke the oppressive silence and an *uta* then came to me thus:—

"In tortuous paths my lonely way now lies
Among rough mountain tracks and scenes all
The rocks and giant trees in silence stood wild
With naught to break the silent depths around
Except the solitary cuckoo's notes
That make the awful silence more profound."

A flock of cranes leads him to fire off the following:—

"Like feathers white the snows fall down and lie
There on the mountain-river's sandy banks;
Ko-Kow, Ko-wow! sounds strange, a melody
I hear—I search around for this strange cry.
In majesty these mountain cranes
I find are proudly strutting—singing thus."

His visionary temperament, indeed, fired by a generous credulity, causes him often to fail in distinguishing fancies from facts. At Sna he heard the voice of a supernatural being calling to him, and again at Sera monastery; and he elsewhere tells us "I was still in an extatic (*sic*) mood." This must have been his mood also when he saw Lhasa and Potala from the track over the "Genpa" (properly Khampa) pass of the Yamdok, the one followed by the Mission, and whence both Lhasa and Potala were certainly invisible. Facts, indeed, are weak points with him throughout. To begin with, even his very first word in the title of his book, "*Three Years in Tibet*" (on the strength of which he absurdly claims for himself a position of greater authority on Tibetan matters than Csoma and Jaeschke, whereas his book shows him to be utterly lacking in scholarship, and even in ordinary knowledge of the language), is falsified by his own proof. On p. 76 he tells us that he crossed the Tibetan frontier for the first time on July 4, 1900; and on pp. 641 and 650 that he finally re-crossed it on emerging from Chumbi on June 14, 1902, thus giving the duration of his entire stay in Tibet as only *one year and 345 days* instead of the "*three years*" to which he gratuitously lays claim! This sort of thing is typical of his matter throughout, so that he is not to be taken too seriously. Nor does he allow his ignorance of details to stand in the way of providing precise fictitious ones. He carried no map or any instruments with him, save a small compass registering the cardinal points, yet he devotes a chapter with the heading "22,650 feet above the sea-level" to a description of his sensations in a snow-storm, when he was somewhere on the plateau, he did not know where. It will be news to the Mission force and to the hundreds of men of the convoys who drank the water of the Yamdok Lake at Nagartse, &c., for several months to be told that the water "is poisonous."

He travelled in the guise of a Chinese Buddhist priest, which his Mongoloid face and acquaintance with the Chinese language rendered not difficult for him. What was more important, he posed as a physician, and, endowed with unbounded assurance and luck, acquired such fame by his "cures" that this brought him to the favourable notice of the Grand Lama. "I came to be regarded as a god of

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medicine," he says, though he naively confesses in excuse for his charlatanism that, not having had any regular medical training, "*I know I made a very dangerous doctor, but I was obliged to go on as a pedant domineering over a society of ignoramuses*"—this is very fine, and worthy of being preserved! Fortunately for Mr. Kawaguchi, the Dalai Lama himself became one of those ignoramuses, and conferred on the "doctor" his intimacy and confidence. But Mr. Kawaguchi is strangely silent as to the subjects of those interesting conversations, beyond the bold general statement that

"I heard and saw much of him (the Grand Lama) and had frequent interviews with him. I judge that he is richer in thoughts political than religious. He seems to fear the British most, and is always thinking how to keep them from Tibet."

Living in constant terror of being robbed explains, perhaps, the low opinion our traveller has formed of his Tibetan co-religionists—so widely different from the experience of sympathetic Western travellers like Rockhill and others. He says:—

"It is impossible to trust oneself entirely to Tibetans, for honesty is observed only among people who are known to one another, and only so long as actions are done before the public gaze. Social restraints are no sooner removed than the Tibetan is ready for any crime or enormity" (!).

Our pious priest, therefore, was perpetually inventing falsehoods to deceive his interlocutors, and to "lay false scents," as he terms it.

When the secret of his disguise leaked out, that he was not a Chinaman, but a Japanese, he tells us that he made a "bolt" from Lhasa to India, assisted by an "ex-Minister and his nun-wife (*sic*). As there was no pursuit, however, his excitement on the way was perhaps more imaginary than warranted. Certainly we cannot say that he has brought back to us any information which is new or important.

The get-up of the book is not at all creditable. It is in the poorest Indian style—it was printed in Madras, and looks it. Misprints also abound, and there is no index. The illustrations have been roughly drawn by a draughtsman in Japan in conventional Japanese style, and exhibit little that is characteristic of Tibet.

We leave the book with the feeling that the really interesting things have been left out.

L. A. WADDELL.

CRITICISM IN GEOLOGY.

La Géologie générale. By Prof. Stanislas Meunier. Pp. xii+344. Second edition. (Paris: Félix Alcan, 1909.) Price 6 francs.

Evolution géologique de la Terre et ancienneté de l'Homme. By Alphonse Cels. Pp. viii+248. (Brussels: Lebegue et Cie., 1909.) Price 5 francs.

THE one point common to these two treatises is that both authors look with a certain enthusiasm on the earth as an active living whole. Prof. Meunier claims that his originality consists in this. For forty

years he has worked towards the expression of a theory of the earth, in which the guiding idea is that

"Le globe est un véritable organisme, où des appareils harmonieusement associés poursuivent la réalisation de fonctions dont l'ensemble se traduit par les progrès d'une évolution planétaire sans arrêt."

The rocks of the earth's crust are in a state of continuous transformation; the characters of a stratum belong to all the ages that have passed since the time of its deposition.

To the mind of the geologist in these islands there is nothing very new in the propositions so clearly set forth in the author's "avertissement," and developed in the work. Some of them, such as the mode of production of flint in limestone (p. 104), and the part played by rain in the excavation of valleys (p. 162), deserve emphasising in lecture-rooms where other views may have prevailed. But they seem rather home-truths nowadays, and are, unfortunately, associated in the book with much that has been discarded in the face of cumulative evidence, and with much that must be characterised as exaggeration of a special point of view. Prof. Meunier, for instance, seems to regard oolitic structure as essentially of secondary origin in the rocks in which it occurs (p. 120); he denies, somewhat late in the day, the glacial origin of the Dwyka conglomerate and similar contemporaneous deposits (p. 277); and, while urging that springs and waterfalls tend inevitably to recede, he minimises the excavating action of a river throughout its ordinary course. Even where we are all prepared to follow him, his triumphal progress is accompanied by too much slaying of the slain. Yet here, as in his previous works, his comments on current explanations of phenomena are always well worth reading. The appearance of a river in a valley as the result of the excavation of the floor down to the surface of the permanent water-table is not new to students of English "bournes"; but it gives one food for thought when applied to larger and permanent cases.

The production of a volcano (p. 74) by the faulting up of a hot region over one saturated with water is distinctly fascinating. The essay (pp. 96-103) on "alluvions verticales," including the South African diamond pipes, has novelty, at any rate, in its treatment of the subject. The essay by Montlosier on the erosion of volcanic relics in Auvergne, published in 1788, was well worthy of resuscitation (p. 158), and forms an interesting feature of a chapter in which full justice is also done to Poulett Scrope. Prof. Meunier has always maintained the community of origin of volcanic and plutonic igneous rocks of various ages; but we doubt if the diagram on p. 82 will gratify students of differentiation. Mr. R. A. Daly, to whom igneous rocks are all basic to begin with, will regard it almost with dismay.

Prof. Meunier's remarks on the relics of the latest—and to him the only—ice-age have a Lyellian ring, but will not satisfy the growing school of glacial investigators. While he rightly urges that considerable areas remained free from ice, though others became for a time concealed, he can hardly convince us nowadays that the glacial epoch was a local phenomenon,